



MICHIGAN SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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The Michigan Snowsports Industries Association (MSIA) was formed in 1990 to speak with one voice for the state ski industry, increase awareness of snowsports and introduce new individuals to skiing and snowboarding in Michigan.

Michigan's winter travel is important to our economy. Here are some snow facts:

- Each year Michigan welcomes between 2 million and 2.4 million skier visits to our slopes
- Michigan has more ski areas (47) than any other state except New York
- The typical ski season is 100 to 104 days long
- Winter travel accounts for nearly 1/3 of the \$20 billion-a-year Michigan travel industry
- Skiing is accessible! No matter where you live in the state, you are within a 2 1/2-hour drive of a ski area.
- MSIA created the Cold is Cool Ski & Ride Passport that allows all 4th and 5th grade students to ski for free at 27 areas across the state.
- Governor Snyder has proclaimed January as Discover Michigan Skiing Month. Ski areas across the state offer a special, low-cost learn-to-ski package in January.
- Michigan turns cold and snowy each year - let's enjoy it!

With just a little cold weather, Michigan's ski slopes can be blanketed in white.

- 28° F. is the "magic number" for snowmaking. When the temperatures drop below this mark, you can be sure Michigan ski areas are making snow.
- 10 inches of natural snow, when packed, usually adds only one inch of snow to the ski slope's base while 10 inches of man-made snow adds seven inches of base. Man-made snow is more dense and durable.
- For every 10-degree temperature drop, snowmakers can double the output of machine-made snow.
- Humidity is a factor as well. The lower the humidity, the better for making snow. If you add the temperature plus the humidity, that sum should equal less than 100 for favorable snowmaking weather.
- Evert Kircher and James Dilworth built and patented the first fan snowmaking gun in the world at Boyne Highlands in Harbor Springs, Michigan.



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House Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee Comments by Mickey MacWilliams

Date: 01/29/18

My name is Mickey MacWilliams and I am the Executive Director of the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association, which represents Michigan's ski areas, ski and snowboard retailers and other related businesses. I had the pleasure of speaking to you back in September and thank you for allowing me to address your committee again.

The Michigan Snowsports Industries Association, or MSIA, develops programs to broaden the awareness of skiing and snowboarding and to introduce people to our sports. Each year Michigan welcomes between 2 million and 2.4 million skier and snowboarder visits on our slopes. In Michigan, travel for winter leisure and recreation is a **\$4.9 billion industry that accounts for nearly one third of the state's leisure travel**. Think about that for a minute if you would. **WINTER ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY ONE THIRD OF MICHIGAN'S LEISURE TRAVEL.**

That's easy to understand, once you see some of our world-class resorts, great ski slopes and wonderful snowmobile trails. It's interesting, no matter where you live in Michigan, you are no further than a 2 ½-hour drive to a ski area. Colorado and Utah can't say that! Of all the states that border us, when it comes to winter recreation, we're the best game in town. Plus, **Michigan has more ski areas than any other state, except New York!**

MSIA was formed 28 years ago to speak with one voice for the state ski industry, increase awareness of snowsports and introduce new individuals to skiing and snowboarding in Michigan. Our pilot program – Discover Michigan Skiing – has introduced over 190,000 people to skiing and snowboarding over those years. Each January ski areas across Michigan offer this special learn-to-ski program which includes a lesson, rental equipment and a lift ticket or trail pass - all for as little as \$20. This year, due to our ad campaign, interest in the Winter Olympics and our snowy weather throughout most of January, we are seeing record numbers of people learning to ski through this program. I'm proud to say that Governor Snyder has proclaimed January as Discover Michigan Snow Sport Month.

I want to remind you that all 4th and 5th graders can ski free in Michigan. This is possible with the Cold is Cool Ski & Ride Passport. MSIA is dedicated to improving the health of the children in our state by offering winter outdoor activities for all Michigan kids and their families. But we don't limit it to just Michigan kids, 4th and 5th graders from anywhere are welcome to ski free here. Our ski areas have pulled together to offer this program for 4th and 5th graders, because they are at the perfect age to learn to ski or snowboard – fearless yet old enough to clearly understand direction. Plus, the Cold is Cool activities are endorsed by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports.

The jobs that the ski industry creates can't be outsourced. It would be pretty hard to move one of our ski hills to another state, or outsource the ski lift attendants that go with them! As long as there is winter, those jobs will always stay right here. The ripple effect of our industry is felt throughout our state. Gas stations, convenience stores, ski and snowmobile outfitters, restaurants, linen services, beverage distributors, lodging facilities and a host of other businesses rely on travelers who head for Michigan's downhill, cross country and snowmobile trails each year.

Michigan has the winter programs, the wonderful ski facilities and unequivocally the best natural resources around. And I am pleased to say that for seven years now we have been able to spread the word. MSIA and Travel Michigan are partners on a Pure Michigan advertising campaign. With matching funds, we broadcast radio ads that direct listeners to the Michigan.org website, where they gained valuable information about winter travel and MSIA's programs. Since the ads have run, our website visits have increased by 75 percent. I am proud to say that our campaign and our programs are working to draw travelers from the surrounding states and Canada.

One important issue that I'd like to make you aware of is our concern regarding climate change. In your folder I've included some information on how snowfall affects our industry in Michigan. This past September I was part of a national group that went to Washington to speak to our Congressmen about issues that affect the ski industry, one of them being climate change. Although this is a global issue, I wanted you to know that it is of concern to us and that we urged our members of congress to join join the Bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus.

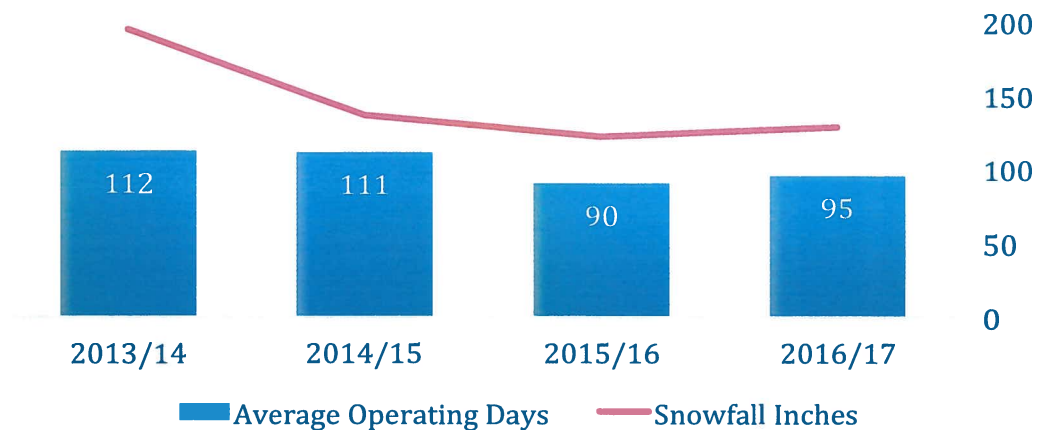
Now, on a more personal note, I want to reiterate my invitation for you to enjoy Michigan's ski slopes and trails this winter. **Humans were never meant to hibernate.** Michigan has the natural resources, and the best ski resorts, slopes and trails in the Great Lakes region. If you haven't experienced our Pure Michigan winter wonderland, I can make that happen. Check your folder for more information. If you haven't skied before, nothing would make me happier than to get you out on the slopes or trails with a certified instructor.

Also in your folder, you'll find one of our MSIA snow scrapers, with our website, goskimichigan.com, printed on the front. Keep this little tool handy! We still have a couple of winter weather months left! Thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to working with you in the future.

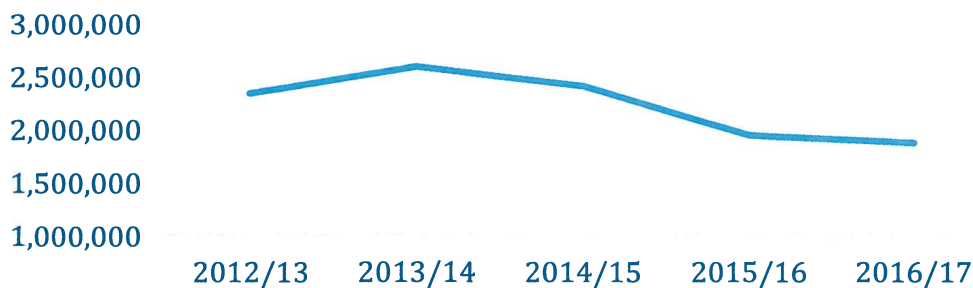
Climate Change

Climate change matters to the ski industry, and ski areas are more committed now than ever to working on climate change solutions.

Total Michigan Snowfall and Days Open



Total Michigan Downhill Snowsports Visits



These graphs illustrate how weather-dependent our industry is in Michigan!

In its 17th year, the National Ski Areas Association operates the Sustainable Slopes program, which advocates for Carbon Pricing Principals, awards grants for sustainability and encourages all ski areas to join their Climate Challenge.

The ski industry advocates for policy changes that will result in across-the-board reductions of carbon emissions – whether they be market-based, such as a price on carbon, or regulatory in nature. We need strong action now to avoid adverse impacts to the ski industry and the rural communities in which we operate.